

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Final Official Action provided. Applicants also note that the Examiner has not indicated that the drawings have been approved by the Official Draftsperson on a Form PTO-948. The Examiner is thus requested to indicate that Applicants' drawings are acceptable in the next Official Action.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 31 and 32.

Claims 1-34 are currently pending. Claims 2-30 remain withdrawn as directed to a nonelected invention. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejection and allowance of claims 1 and 31-34 in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 33, and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by INOUE et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,455,190). The Examiner takes the position that the INOUE et al. patent discloses a prismatic battery including a plurality of cell cases connected through short lateral walls with an electroconductive connector 31, 32 forming a central part of the separation wall, and positive and negative electrode plates 18, 19 having lead portions 18a, 19a.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that INOUE et al. fails to show each and every element recited in the claims. In particular, claim 1 sets forth a prismatic battery module including, inter alia, an electroconductive connector forming at least a central part of the separation wall; and an electrode plate group arranged in each of the plurality of cell cases; “wherein the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are directly connected to the respective electroconductive connectors arranged on both sides of each cell case”. Claim 33 sets forth a method for manufacturing a prismatic battery module including, inter alia, connecting a plurality of prismatic cell cases with each other through separation walls, at least a central part of which is formed of an electroconductive connector; forming an electrode plate group; and “placing the electrode plate group in each of the cell cases to directly connect the lead portions on either side of the electrode plate group to the respective electroconductive connectors arranged on both sides of the cell case”. Claim 34 sets forth a method for manufacturing a prismatic battery module including, inter alia, forming a prismatic battery case having a space in which a plurality of cell cases are to be formed in a row; forming an electrode plate group; and “connecting the lead portions of the positive and the negative electrode plates of the electrode plate groups with each other solely through electroconductive connector plates”.

The INOUE et al. patent discloses a battery module including a plurality of cell cases connected through lateral walls, and positive and negative electrode plates 18, 19 having lead

portions 18a, 19a. The INOUE et al. patent does not disclose a battery in which lead portions of electrode plates are *directly* connected to electroconductive connectors. In this regard, Applicants note that the INOUE et al. patent discloses that the positive and negative lead portions 18a, 19a are connected to the collector plates 31, 32. The collector plates 31, 32 are provided with connection bosses 33 serving as an electroconductive connector. Additionally, contrary to the Examiner's position, the connection bosses 33 form an upper edge portion of the separation wall. See particularly figures 2 and 7a, and the abstract of the disclosure ("collector plates are connected respectively to the groups of positive and negative electrode plates at opposite lateral edges thereof" and "the connection bosses of the collector plates in neighboring cells are abutted each other and welded together, whereby two adjacent cells are connected to each other"). Accordingly, the INOUE et al. patent does not disclose a battery in which lead portions of electrode plates are *directly* connected to electroconductive connectors as recited in independent claims 1, 33, and 34.

Accordingly, the INOUE et al. patent does not show a device "wherein the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are directly connected to the respective electroconductive connectors arranged on both sides of each cell case", as set forth in claim 1. Further, the INOUE et al. patent fails to show a method including "placing the electrode plate group in each of the cell cases to directly connect the lead portions on either side of the electrode plate group to the respective electroconductive connectors arranged on both sides

of the cell case”, as set forth in claim 33. The INOUE et al. patent fails to show a method including “connecting the lead portions of the positive and the negative electrode plates of the electrode plate groups with each other solely through electroconductive connector plates”, as set forth in claim 34. Since the reference fails to show each and every element of the claimed device and method, the rejection of claims 1, 33, and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over INOUE et al. is improper and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and an early indication of the allowance of claims 1 and 31-34.

COMMENTS ON EXAMINER’S STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

In response to the Reasons for Allowance, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for the patentability of the claims in the present invention.

In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner’s indication that (as noted by the Examiner) the prior art of record does not “teach or suggest the claimed invention regarding the lead portions of the electrode plates including projections which are joined together to form a raised portion, with the electroconductive connector having a connection surface that comes into contact with a side of the raised portion”, Applicants further wish to make clear that the claims in the present application recite a combination of features, and that patentability of these claims is also based on the totality of the features recited therein, which define over the prior art.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present response is proper and that none of the references of record, considered alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention as recited in claims 1 and 31-34. The applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

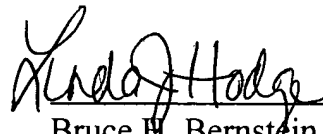
Accordingly, consideration of the present response, reconsideration of the outstanding Final Official Action, and allowance of all of the claims in the present application are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

P21764.A08

Should there be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,  
Takashi ASAHINA et al.

 Reg No 47348  
Bruce H. Bernstein  
Reg. No. 29,027

February 20, 2005  
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.  
1950 Roland Clarke Place  
Reston, VA 20191  
(703) 716-1191